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## PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE, AUSTRALIA, SEPTEMBER 1979 (PRELIMINARY) (Including discouraged jobseekers)

### INQUIRIES

If you want to know more about these statistics ring Mr Eric Hubbard on Canberra 526507 or our State Office, or write to Information Services, ABS, P.O. Box 10, Belconnen, A.C.T. 2616  
For copies of this publication contact Information Services, Canberra 526627 or State offices.

### MAIN FEATURES

*Note : Survey estimates are subject to sampling variability, as explained in paragraph 11 below.*

In September 1979 an estimated 2,892,000 persons aged 15 to 64 years were not in the labour force (i.e. were neither employed nor unemployed). Of these:

- 2,136,900 did not want a full-time or part-time job.
- 663,700 would, or might, have liked a job. Of these:

74,000 were discouraged jobseekers, i.e. they wanted a job but had not actively looked for work because they believed that there were no suitable jobs in their locality, that employers considered them too young or too old, or that they lacked the necessary schooling, experience, etc.

53,800 had actively looked for work in the four weeks before the interview week but could not have started work in the survey week.

the remaining 535,900 persons had not actively looked for work, for the following reasons:

|                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| family reasons                       | 217,900 |
| attending an educational institution | 110,700 |
| ill health, disability, pregnancy    | 88,400  |
| had no need to work                  | 51,600  |
| had a job to go to                   | 20,500  |
| no jobs in suitable hours            | 10,100  |
| other reasons                        | 36,700  |

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

#### Introduction

In September 1979 a survey, based on the monthly population survey, was conducted throughout Australia in order to obtain information about persons aged 15 to 64 years who were not in the labour force; in particular whether they wanted a job and, if they did, the reason they were not looking for work. Results of similar surveys conducted in November 1975, May 1977 and March 1979 were published in *Persons not in the Labour Force* (6220.0).

2. This publication contains only a summary of the more important results of the survey. More detailed

estimates, which will be published as soon as possible, are available on request. The estimates shown are preliminary and are subject to revision.

3. The survey was based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (about 30,000 houses, flats etc.) and non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, institutions, etc.) and covered about two-thirds of one per cent of the population of Australia. The information was obtained from the occupants of selected dwellings by carefully chosen and specially trained interviewers, the interviews being conducted during the two weeks beginning on Monday, 10th September 1979.

#### Scope

4. The survey included all persons aged fifteen years and over except:

- (a) members of the permanent defence forces
- (b) certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from census and estimated populations
- (c) overseas visitors holidaying in Australia, and
- (d) members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants) stationed in Australia.

#### Definitions

5. The labour force category to which a person is assigned depends on his *actual activity* (i.e. whether working, looking for work, etc.) during a specified week known as the *survey week*, which is the week immediately preceding that in which the interview takes place. Definitions of the principal labour force categories appearing in this publication are given in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

6. *Persons who wanted a job* are those who were not employed at the time of the survey, and:

- (i) in the four weeks before the interview week had not looked for work but in the survey answered "yes" or "maybe" to the question "Even though you have not been looking for work would you like a full-time or part-time job now?", or
- (ii) although claiming to have looked for work in the four weeks before the interview week, had not taken active steps (as defined below) to find employment.

(*Active steps to find work* include checking or registering with the Commonwealth Employment Service or other employment agencies, writing, telephoning or applying in person to an employer, answering a newspaper advertisement for a job, advertising or tendering for work, contacting friends or relatives and looking on factory or employment service notice boards.)

7. *Discouraged jobseekers* are persons who wanted a job but were not actively looking for work because they believed they would not be able to find a job for any of the following reasons: they were considered by employers to be too young or too old; they had language or racial difficulties; they lacked the necessary training, skills or experience; or there were no jobs in their locality or line of work. This definition has been revised since the previous survey. See paragraphs 9 and 10 for the effect of the change.

8. Persons included in the survey who wanted a job but were not actively looking for work were asked to give reasons why they were not doing so. Reasons were ranked in the order of priority shown in Table 2; where more than one reason was given, only the higher or highest ranked has been included in the estimates in Table 2.

#### Discontinuities in the series

9. The estimates in this publication are not strictly comparable with those obtained from previous surveys, because the definition of *persons who wanted a job* has been widened to include those persons referred to in paragraph 6(ii), i.e. persons who, although claiming to have looked for work in the four weeks before the interview week, had not taken active steps (as defined above) to find employment. Estimates of the numbers of such persons are:

|                | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i> | <i>Persons</i> |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| November 1975  | *            | 9,400          | 11,900         |
| May 1977       | 5,600        | 14,800         | 20,400         |
| March 1979     | 13,300       | 33,000         | 46,300         |
| September 1979 | 9,100        | 33,400         | 42,500         |

10. Some of these persons are now classified as *discouraged jobseekers*, the additional number in September 1979 being 8,000 persons (7,200 females). Corresponding estimates for earlier periods are not available.

#### Reliability of the estimates

11. Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings they are subject to sampling variability; that is they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors. A table of estimated standard errors for this survey is shown below. Estimates with a standard error of more than about 22 per cent have not been shown in this publication, as the degree of sampling variability would seriously detract from their value for most reasonable uses. Although figures for these small components can, in some cases, be derived by subtraction they should not be regarded as reliable. More information about this topic will be found in *The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0).

#### Related publications

12. Other ABS publications which may be of interest include:

- The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0)
- Labour Force Experience* (6206.0)
- Persons not in the Labour Force* (6220.0)
- Persons Looking for Work* (6222.0)
- Labour Mobility* (6209.0)

13. All publications produced by the ABS are listed in *Catalogue of Publications* (1101.0) which is available free of charge from any ABS office.

#### Symbols and other usages

- \* subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses. See paragraph 11 above.
- n.a. not available
- .. not applicable.

14. Because figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

R. J. CAMERON  
Australian Statistician

#### STANDARD ERRORS OF ESTIMATES

| <i>Size of estimate<br/>(Persons)</i> | <i>Approximate standard error<br/>of estimates</i> |                                 | <i>Size of estimate<br/>(Persons)</i> | <i>Approximate standard error<br/>of estimates</i> |                                 |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
|                                       | <i>Persons</i>                                     | <i>Per cent<br/>of estimate</i> |                                       | <i>Persons</i>                                     | <i>Per cent<br/>of estimate</i> |
| 4,500                                 | 970  | 21.6                            | 100,000                               | 3,900  | 3.9                             |
| 5,000                                 | 1,000  | 20.0                            | 200,000                               | 5,100  | 2.6                             |
| 6,000                                 | 1,100  | 18.0                            | 300,000                               | 6,000  | 2.0                             |
| 10,000                                | 1,400  | 14.0                            | 500,000                               | 7,200  | 1.4                             |
| 20,000                                | 2,000  | 10.0                            | 1,000,000                             | 9,100  | 0.9                             |
| 50,000                                | 2,900  | 5.8                             | 2,000,000                             | 11,000   | 0.6                             |
|                                       |  |                                 | 5,000,000                             | 15,000   | 0.3                             |

TABLE 1. CIVILIAN POPULATION AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER : EMPLOYMENT STATUS, SEPTEMBER 1979

|  | Number ('000) |         |          | Per cent of total |         |         |
|--|---------------|---------|----------|-------------------|---------|---------|
|  | Males         | Females | Persons  | Males             | Females | Persons |
| Civilian population aged 15 years and over   | 5,275.7       | 5,408.9 | 10,684.6 | 100.0             | 100.0   | 100.0   |
| Employed   | 3,939.3       | 2,178.8 | 6,118.1  | 74.7              | 40.3    | 57.3    |
| Unemployed   | 201.6         | 194.9   | 396.5    | 3.8               | 3.6     | 3.7     |
| Not in the labour force  | 1,134.7       | 3,035.2 | 4,170.0  | 21.5              | 56.1    | 39.0    |
| Aged 65 years and over   | 506.0         | 772.0   | 1,278.0  | 9.6               | 14.3    | 12.0    |
| Aged 15 to 64 years  | 628.8         | 2,263.2 | 2,892.0  | 11.9              | 41.8    | 27.1    |
| Inmate of an institution, permanently unable to work, boarding school student  | 56.9          | 34.4    | 91.4     | 1.1               | 0.6     | 0.9     |
| Had actively looked for work but was unable to start a job in the survey week for reasons other than own temporary illness or injury | 26.0          | 27.9    | 53.8     | 0.5               | 0.5     | 0.5     |
| Had not actively looked for work   | 546.0         | 2,200.9 | 2,746.9  | 10.3              | 40.7    | 25.7    |
| Did not want a job   | 423.8         | 1,689.9 | 2,113.7  | 8.0               | 31.2    | 19.8    |
| Did not know whether wanted a job  | *             | 20.5    | 23.2     | *                 | 0.4     | 0.2     |
| Wanted a job   | 119.4         | 490.5   | 609.9    | 2.3               | 9.1     | 5.7     |
| Had taken only non-active steps to find a job (a)  | 9.1           | 33.4    | 42.5     | 0.2               | 0.6     | 0.4     |
| Had taken no steps at all to find a job  | 110.3         | 457.1   | 567.4    | 2.1               | 8.5     | 5.3     |
| Would have liked a job   | 92.8          | 386.4   | 479.2    | 1.8               | 7.1     | 4.5     |
| Might have liked a job   | 17.5          | 70.8    | 88.3     | 0.3               | 1.3     | 0.8     |
| Discouraged (b)  | 8.6           | 65.4    | 74.0     | 0.2               | 1.2     | 0.7     |
| Had other reasons for not actively looking for work (b)  | 110.9         | 425.1   | 535.9    | 2.1               | 7.9     | 5.0     |

(a) See paragraph 6. (b) See Table 2.

TABLE 2. PERSONS AGED 15 TO 64 YEARS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE WHO WANTED A JOB: REASONS FOR NOT ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR WORK (a) AND WHETHER INTENDING TO LOOK FOR WORK IN THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS, SEPTEMBER 1979 ('000)

| Reason for not actively looking for work (a)  | Intention to look for work in the next twelve months |            |                |              | Total |         |         |
|---|--|------------|----------------|--------------|-------|---------|---------|
|   | Intended to look                                     | Might look | Would not look | Did not know | Males | Females | Persons |
| Had a job to go to  | (b)  | (b)        | (b)            | (b)          | 8.2   | 12.2    | 20.5    |
| Own ill health, disability, pregnancy   | 38.0   | 19.0       | 28.6           | *            | 33.6  | 54.8    | 88.4    |
| Attending an educational institution  | 75.0   | 12.3       | 22.2           | *            | 50.6  | 60.1    | 110.7   |
| Had no need to work   | 15.9   | 11.5       | 21.6           | *            | 7.4   | 44.2    | 51.6    |
| Family considerations (c)   | 76.2   | 51.2       | 81.7           | 8.7          | *     | 214.4   | 217.9   |
| Ill health of other than self   | 5.4  | *          | *              | *            | *     | 13.1    | 13.6    |
| Unable to find child care   | 14.4   | 8.9        | 7.8            | *            | *     | 32.1    | 32.4    |
| Preferred to look after children  | 38.6   | 24.9       | 56.6           | 5.0          | *     | 124.7   | 125.2   |
| Other family considerations   | 16.6   | 11.1       | 9.5            | *            | *     | 36.3    | 38.5    |
| Discouraged   | 38.3   | 16.2       | 17.6           | *            | 8.6   | 65.4    | 74.0    |
| Considered too young or too old by employers  | 7.4  | *          | 5.6            | *            | *     | 15.7    | 17.7    |
| Language or racial difficulties, lacked necessary schooling, training, skills or experience | 6.6  | *          | *              | *            | *     | 8.2     | 10.1    |
| No jobs in locality or line of work   | 24.4   | 9.5        | 11.0           | *            | 4.8   | 41.5    | 46.3    |
| No jobs in suitable hours   | 5.6  | *          | *              | *            | *     | 9.5     | 10.1    |
| Other reasons (d)   | 21.5   | *          | 9.5            | *            | 6.9   | 29.8    | 36.7    |
| <b>Total</b>  |  |            |                |              |       |         |         |
| Males   | 61.8   | 18.7       | 27.6           | *            | 119.4 | ..      | ..      |
| Females   | 208.8  | 98.6       | 155.2          | 15.6         | ..    | 490.5   | ..      |
| Persons   | 270.6  | 117.4      | 182.8          | 18.7         | ..    | ..      | 609.9   |

(a) Highest ranked reason only. See paragraph 8. (b) Intention to look for work in the next twelve months was not asked of persons who were not looking for work because they already had a job to go to. (c) Includes 8,200 females whose spouses disapproved of their taking a job.

(d) Includes 5,800 persons who gave no reason.

